

**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**World AIDS Day**  
Wednesday, December 1, 2005

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## **Ideas for Activities in Your Facility**

Activities in recognition of World AIDS Day can range from small-scale, simpler activities to ambitious, multifaceted events. The important thing is that making people aware of this day provides an opportunity to get out key messages that memorialize those who have passed on, that acknowledge and support VA staff who care for veterans with HIV/AIDS, and that recognize what VA is doing for its veteran patients with HIV/AIDS or who are at risk for the disease, how HIV/AIDS can be prevented and what the risk factors are, how the disease can be treated, and how patients with HIV/AIDS are managing with the disease. .

Most of the following ideas are real-life examples of events and activities that have been conducted in VA facilities:

### **Provide visuals and information**

- Set up tables and booths in your lobby, at your clinics, and outside canteens with educational materials, videos, snacks, and giveaways, such as AIDS ribbons and condoms.
- Hang posters, banners, and other materials about HIV prevention or other information in the lobby, by the canteen, or at clinics for infectious disease, substance abuse, mental health, women's health, and other specialties.
- Create bulletin boards for lobby displays.
- Prepare a resource list of Web sites on HIV/AIDS for distribution to staff or patients.
- Prepare a reading list of books and other reading material on HIV/AIDS for staff or patients.
- Prepare a resource list of movies about HIV/AIDS for distribution to staff or patients.
- Distribute fact sheets on HIV/AIDS in the US, VA, or your community.
- Display sections of the National AIDS Quilt (NAMES Project) or your own AIDS quilt or other memorial artwork or photographs.
- Create your own community AIDS quilt and display it.

### **Hold events**

- Hold a ceremony or service in your chapel to memorialize those with HIV/AIDS who have passed on.
- Create awards for staff, patients, or VA or community organizations that have made significant contributions in the past year; hold an event or recognition ceremony.
- Put on educational programs or groups at lunch or in the evening. Consider a series, such as an hour a night, to cover different aspects of HIV/AIDS.
- Hold a movie night and ask an expert to be available afterwards to discuss what your facility does for veterans with HIV/AIDS and answer questions.

### **Involve staff**

- Ask your experts to speak at seminars and programs or do interviews with local and health reporters.
- Set up a special HIV testing clinic.
- Ask health care staff to be available at displays to answer questions about HIV/AIDS.
- Coordinate with your cafeteria or canteen manager to provide customers materials about HIV/AIDS or to advertise your World AIDS Day events and activities. Examples are tray inserts, tent cards, or handouts

### **Involve patients**

Some facilities have found that involving patients not only can enable more to be done, but be empowering and encouraging for patients themselves.

- Organize a meeting of patients with HIV and their loved ones to share experiences for healthy living.
- Ask patients to staff displays and hand out materials.
- Include patients on panels at medical education programs on HIV/AIDS.
- Ask patients to speak on living with HIV/AIDS or prevention.
- Ask patients to make AIDS ribbons. (Perhaps a local fabric or notions store can donate ribbon; one VA HIV coordinator collects red ribbon on sale year-round for this purpose.)
- Provide a quiz for patients to test their knowledge of HIV, AIDS, transmission, and prevention.

### **Involve the community**

There may be a number of other local organizations within and outside of your facility that provide care and information related to HIV/AIDS. These may include Vet Centers, local health departments, churches, and other groups that may serve or support veterans with HIV/AIDS. World AIDS gives you an opportunity to renew your relationships with these groups and them an opportunity to offer information on their services as well.

- Invite your community-based service organizations to provide displays along side yours. One VA facility “takes over” the lobby of the medical center with displays of their own and of local community services.
- Recruit local musicians to play during events or make the music an event of its own.
- Recruit local schools to have students create paintings, drawings and other art to commemorate AIDS or World AIDS Day for display at clinics or lobbies.

#### **VA HIV/AIDS Programs**

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